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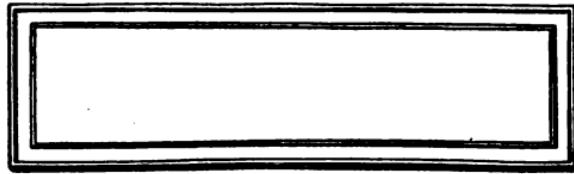
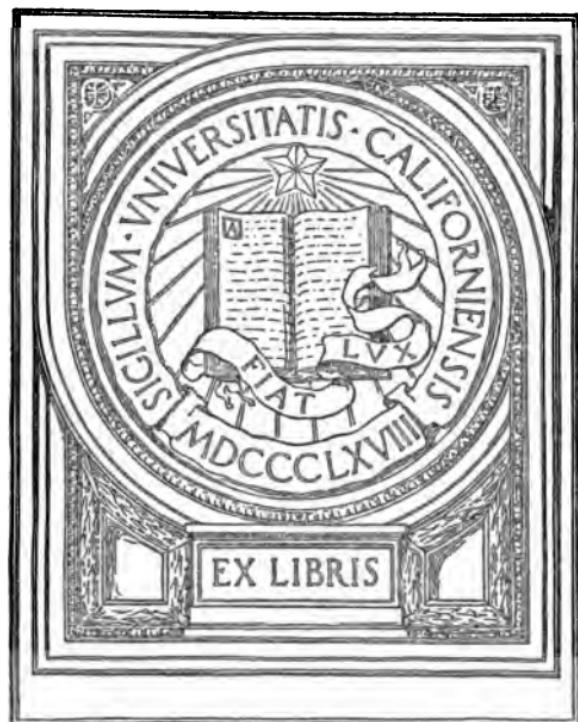
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**JOHN McGOVERN'S  
POEMS**







JOHN  
McGOVERN'S  
POEMS



WILLIAM S. LORD  
EVANSTON  
1902

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TO  
MY BELOVED WIFE,  
A HASTENING FRIEND, WHEN EVEN  
NOBLE DUTY MIGHT HAVE  
COME WITH STATELY  
STEP

**M515749**

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## JOHN McGOVERN'S POEMS

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### THE KINE

**S**WEET-BREATHING kine looked up from  
clover-mead,  
And night had come. Therefore they kneeled them  
down,  
And soon the field was freshened, and perfume  
Distilled for morn. With eyes as deep as heaven,  
And peaceful as the evening, gazed the flock  
Upon the skies; and in those eyes benign  
All night on went the starry flight eternal.  
O wisdom of that wider view! They saw,  
And were not envious. They knew enough  
When they did know that Dawn would light their  
meadow.

The sun came o'er a corner of the earth  
Far to the north. Soft cooed the prairie-hens,  
And yellow-breasted meadow-larks took wing  
To chide their great dumb friends. Beshuddering  
Their glossy coats, the kine arose, and lo!  
(Hast ever seen a stretch of clover-bloom?)  
The firmament had fallen to the field!

They from Orion to the Dragon roamed  
And plucked that morn a thousand dewy stars.

## GENIUS

**I**T IS the fire beneath some night-fly's wing,  
Making a star out of the risen worm.

## THE TREES

THE Sun came onward, scourging all the stars  
Out of his temple. Maples, oaks, and elms  
Stood foiled in gold, and sheltered timid airs  
That scarcely moved from fear of March the Lion  
Sleeping hard by. Thus passed a day of summer  
Truant out of June, its wandering hours  
Delighting Winter, calling heaven down,  
And luring birds to love-songs.

Blear, unkempt,  
The waking Lion roared; the pale North Wind  
Sped from his realm. All terrified, the trees  
Made lowly genuflections through the night,  
Confessed their sin, and moaned for clemency;  
Yet when their friend, the poet, came to them,  
He found long rows of woody penitents  
Dressed with disgrace—in convict garb of snow—  
And wailing. “I myself am hurt,” he said.  
“So, if ye grieve, my barer woes may speak,  
For ye have gnarléd circles round your hearts  
Buckler on buckler. Strike your Eolian dirge—  
Song of the sepulchre! O cruel years!  
O Friendship’s welcome turned to Venom’s coil!—  
O youth’s ambition grown to manhood’s greed!—  
O spring of hope, and pale North Wind of Death!  
Yea, weep, you maples, oaks and elms!” he cried;  
“Ye are my better tongue, ye are my wo;  
I saw your icy lord, I heard your prayers,  
I know your sentence—sound our misery!”

## HOW BRIGHT JEHOVAH'S CARPET

**H**OW bright Jehovah's carpet! Splendid Hour  
Complete with glory—all thy  
Milky Way

Pulsing eternity! Man upward looks;  
He looks, and upward aims; and calm-eyed beasts  
That sleep not, have thy golden deep for dreams!  
Lo, I, most miserable of the flesh,  
Proclaim within me throbings of the light  
From yonder stars. For I have something star-like  
Jealously sentinelled, and leashed with heart-strings,  
Which, when the heavens throw their portals wide,  
To pay thee, Night, their ceremonial,  
Peers forth on each familiar galaxy,  
As if those beacons burned for its return.  
And as I lay my head at rest, each eve,  
Thy oft-recurring mandate to obey,  
O Night, I feel my prisoner more glad,  
More confident of his release. Alas!  
Why breaks my soul so quickly from my keep?  
Why yearns, alas! my body for my soul?  
Alas! why does my quivering form belie  
Its wretched doom when I upsend my eyes!  
O Night! forgive my bodily delight!  
Forgive my body's envy of my soul!  
Make my poor flesh and blood like calm-eyed beast's,  
And let me have thy golden deep for dreams.

## PRIEST OF THE MORNING

**T**HE morning twilight surges through the dome—

The dawn awaits. So has my soul sat still,  
And, like this day, full late the beam of peace  
Has come from haunts deep in the Eastern stars.  
Fierce writhes and coils the Night, and westward  
rolls

A mass of darkness and despair, a load  
To weight a Universe, put on a world!  
O life! O God! O sea of orient sky!  
There is with me an end of soughing waves!—  
An end of casting anchors in mid-sea!—  
An end of chart without a firmament!  
Now Morn uplifts this sinister pavilion;  
Now valiant Hope rebukes my soul's confusion;  
Now Joy stands at the gateways of my heart  
Guiding the flood. O Sun in hidden heaven!  
Whose gold is liveried on thy couriers  
The utmost clouds—whose coming carpets Earth  
Beauteous with life—whose coming tunes the woods  
With warblers' sweet devotions—to my voice,  
My ruder song, give rapid messengers—  
The invisible acolytes of thy golden fane—  
To wing it to yon pillar in the air,  
Thy morning altar lit with silvery fires!

Accept my offering; pour thy earliest gold  
Out on thy pitiful, who then shall be  
All holy-dipped, emerged from Paradise—  
A glorious slave, thy shining worshiper!

## I HEARD A LARK

I HEARD a lark amid the morning clouds  
That wrapt his flight of song. As if that lark,  
Seer of the dawn, rose on prophetic wing,  
The sun now gorged the canyons of the sky,  
And, all the barriers of the zenith breaking,  
On happy Earth there flowed a shining ocean.

With this thing seeing, I, poor wonderling,  
Made half of saddened sunlight, raised mine eyes,  
Cast off my baser part, and grew eternal.

Lark of the earth, thy song shall still go on  
When mocking blasts bestrow thy tiny plumes.  
E'en now thy notes of earlier spring may be  
Well out upon an awful pilgrimage,  
Where dumb, despised, unshapen worlds go by,  
And all is dark forever. Yea, although  
The hand of Cruelty might scarcely feel  
Thy heart-beats in its grasp, not less thy cry  
May probe eternity, to leave behind  
Faith's low petition and Doubt's loud harangue.

### COMET OF 1882

**B**RIDE of the morning star, hath not my soul  
Enough of envy in these nightly hosts?  
Coms't thou to wake our spirits from their sleep  
Of dumb, dull discontent? Bright apparition, fade.  
O fade not from my clinging eyes! Take me—  
Take that of me thou wilt—from off this orb  
Where Sin and Death are prisoned; let me join  
Thy splendid train, and aid, in dawning skies,  
Those happier stars that bear thy shining veil.

## SUNRISE

**S**WIFT Michigan, full-rigged with white cap sail,  
Crowded to port her squadrons infinite,  
Beneath a sky where Nature's dye was mixing  
For maidens' morning blushes. Flying swallows  
Surveyed the province ceded o'er to Dawn,  
And called their links and chains in upper air  
With iteration unmelodious.  
Along the shore where envious waves peeped over,  
A play-yard stretched for miles, and iron monsters,  
Unyoked from toils and journeyings gigantic,  
Shouted harsh-sounding joy. Tall shadow dancers  
Woke into yachts, yet gaily reveled on,  
While steamers cheerless as the eye of Greed,  
And swoln with avarice, stole round the pier,  
And put the waves to flight. The amethyst  
And velvet air—where Night the Jeweler  
Had spread bright riches brought from regions far—  
On ruddier ether rose—as gently rose  
As moves the sentried heart through dreams that  
look  
On scenes where all goes well. The lighthouse flash  
That in the darkness oft had bridged the waves  
With shining girders, flickered like a wick  
Fal'n in the oil. As in swift-plowing ship  
The venturous voyager, filled with low throbs  
And vessel-motions multitudinous,  
Peers toward the furnaces that shore his seas—  
So toward the east, deep in the firmament  
Forthcoming with the morning star, the eye

Peered to espy the heavenly enginery  
That wheeled black-shrouded earth to shores of day.

Now all but man was ready. All but he  
With little patience—quivering—beheld  
This eastern panoply. In highest flight,  
Where golden wings awaited, eager birds,  
Like sailor on the mast, from tiny throats  
Proclaimed the coming; bright on every spire  
Shone confirmation. Rapt in fume and flame  
The iron chargers, oft-defeated, looked  
Upon their vanquisher. Out on the pier  
From full six hundred thousand slumberers,  
A dozen fishermen with dumb thoughts filled  
And cast their lines again. The harbor-lamp  
Grew thin and yellow, as it had been shut  
Within a book for years. The yachts their dance  
Pushed to a close, and Nature, thus prepared,  
Glowed proudly on Lake Michigan, that then  
Most splendidly returned her warmest smile.

Up rose the Sun all haired with living fires.

### I PRAY

WHEN white-eyed Death shall fright my timid  
flesh,  
And chase my spirit from his habitation,  
May willing yet unwilling hands take me  
To unoffended Nature. Then, O God!  
Give me the memory of an honest man,  
And unseen flowers shall keep my grave as sweet  
As lilac-banks that make one narrow week  
The only recollection of a year.

## THE POET

### I

**H**E SITS before a great keyed instrument,  
The human heart—built like some Alpine mill  
To wheel its echoes to the joyous heights  
Or urge them through the gloom. And as he sits  
O'er all the jarrings of the rough red rill  
That plunges down to Death, he strikes a chord,  
And Love reverberates. Pleased with his craft,  
He, holding all his keys, with quivering hands,  
Joins on Affection's softening part, and plies  
Sad Duty's stops and lowly harmonies.

Thus flows the psalm of Family and of Home—  
The sweetest measures of the poet's art,  
Yet on his mystic keyboard, oh! how few  
The pipes that play!—how insignificant!

### II

Then comes the flame, the flaming stride of War,—  
The poet's hearthstone set to head the graves  
Of slaughtered sire and son! Then breaks the storm  
From forth the angry pipes; then comes the roar  
Of mighty octaves, wild and tempest-tossed,  
With passion-cries of freedom crashed and hurled  
In grievous ruin, like some city's sack  
Of precious wares. Behold yon tyrant's throne  
Set high beyond the hurt of cannon's wrath!  
Yet see it quake!—aye! 'tis an airy thing  
To shore the moving deeps of Liberty!

### III

The player trembles like his low-blown reeds,  
His hand is weak, the snow drifts through his pipes.  
Where breaks that flood which filled the gorge of life  
With such sweet-sounding waves that voyagers  
Baptized with freshened hearts?—the gloria!  
Why drowns he not with joyous giant chords  
The murmurs of an unhomed, childless wo?

Thou heedest not! The patriarchal ear  
Hears from the strains on High some cadences;  
He holds his touch upon the keys thus light  
That he may join the Choir in unison.  
Behold his agéd face (chiseled by Time—  
An evil sculptor, yet a master-hand)!  
Sublime he smiles and strikes the key of heaven,  
Asking of his still noble house of sound  
But this last anthem. Hark! it swells anew!  
Now breathe in prayer and fall ye on your knees!  
Now lave ye in the holy waves of holy airs!  
The God of Hosts hymns with his wafting worlds—  
Adoring Earth pulsates with Paradise!

## DEATH AND MY FELLOWS

I THOUGHT, with selfish thankfulness: "If men  
Were all immortal save myself, how sad,  
How sadly terrible would be my plight!  
How like the Aztecs' captive I should be—  
A victim for the knife, though loaded down  
With luxuries—if I were hailed each morn  
By brothers of the sun! And, when I died,  
With what astonishment the golden-aged  
Would look upon my corse! my villain corse!  
That in their company had flashed a gem  
Which had been stolen—property of soul  
Sought by the Officer!" With thinking this,  
I went among my comrades yesterday,  
And offered them ambrosia for their locks,  
And nectar in their cups! I told them all,  
That god-like ichor made their countenances  
Most pleasurable—their flesh o'er-radiant!  
The world smiled like a narrow-sighted babe  
That sees, yet can but see, its mother's breast,  
And I, poor courtier, sick with giving joy,  
Fled toward my dreams last night in dismal dread  
That death should cast his ashes over me,  
And never-dying beings bear my pall!

## TO RUBINSTEIN

*On hearing his Ocean Storm portrayed by one hundred and seventy musicians.*

**T**HOU shining soul, by Fame bright burning  
kept,  
Is God not angry when the wind is wailing  
Hopeless with dread? And when He bids the storm  
To whip the gamut of each shrieking shroud  
And trumpet thunders—speaks He calmly then?

If thou, on shore no braver than thyself,  
Canst key the sounding cloud, and at thy will  
Chord all the terrors of the secret deep,  
Then may those greater accents of God's voice  
Be taught to me, if thou interpretest!

Before Jehovah's ark mute penitents  
Bent round high priest, and breathing frankincense  
And myrrh and holy oils, revived their souls.  
Thou my high priest shalt be! Within thy fane  
With formless ceremony, yet in garb  
And ephod of bright genius, thou shalt list  
To my devout and prostrate supplication;  
Mine shall be thy rites, and thou God's power  
Shalt bring to my blind soul, as I do hear  
Great ocean's heart-beats sound a deep alarm  
Lest God through space should hurl its screaming  
bulk  
Or scatter it for dew on waking worlds.

## TIME

**M**AN whitens into death and lays him down  
In dreadful slumber 'neath a roof-like mound  
That sinks soon in upon his dust. A stone  
His name proclaims a little longer, falls,  
And crumbles, having filled an empty use.  
Anon the plow rives up the fattened ground,  
And harvests press like anxious waves. Then war.  
The peaceful plowman flees before a host  
Of conquering invaders come to sack,  
And strip, and pillage. Soon the straggling brush  
Starts into saplings, and the saplings wax  
To solemn woods. Now comes the simple bard,  
And peers with wonder in among the trees  
That weave their colors with the fragrant air,  
And sings: "This is the forest—this must be  
The forest called primeval, and untrod."  
Forward the cycles roll—the ax, the fires.  
The plow, the harvest moons, the grave, the sword,  
The impenetrable councils of the oaks,  
And last some circlings of a corse-like orb—  
Until the world, a worn and fluttering moth,  
Drops in the central conflagration, and expires.

## A RHAPSODY

*Auroral Tumult on the morning of April 17, 1882.*

**F**ORTH from the watches of the night I gaze  
To place the Greater Bear—Help! Help! the  
world!  
Awake! ye sleeping hosts, and read the sky!

A whirlpool snatching at a million streams,  
Sucking the glory of the universe;  
A cataract that falls where I would rise;  
An awful flood, on which the stars shine strangely;  
A tide ethereal, all space engulfing,  
As though the current of the Milky Way  
Had overflown—as though the wandering earth  
Passed through the luster of some greater sun  
Whose night was day! Fall down, self-sceptered  
soul!  
Fling off thy garb of state! Thou art within  
The ante-chambers of the court of Heaven!

A tabernacle stanchioned with broad beams  
Of silvery fire, and keyed with frosted stars;  
And at the apex, waving scrolls of flame,  
Doubtless two angels momentarily—  
So that my favored soul should see them there,  
Yet not in holy agony expire.

Quick from the mystic north the living light  
Clammers the stars, or flows the fitting robes  
Of God's ambassadors; and through the gate  
Thick clouds of glory back and downward plunge,  
As if outbound effulgence suddenly  
Had peered on Sabaoth!

O God! Thou liv'st!  
Thou surely liv'st! I am so near Thee now!  
Open Thy reverent firmament to me!  
Unshade mine asking eyes!—Protect mine eyes!

## I SAW A LIGHT

I SAW a Light upreared afar, so pure  
That to my constant gaze it seemed to come  
Half-way to me. With hope born from our prayers,  
We on a night of waters tossed; yet came  
From other country of an eastern sky  
The fearful pillage of a cold-eyed Dawn,  
That stole our star to gem some new-made night,  
And stationed Horror in our pilot-house.

I felt a Love so full of charity,  
That to my yearning heart it seemed to come  
Half-way to me. And then, all through a night  
Filled with heart-broken days, I stood the watch  
At misery's masthead, and in break of day  
When Love died out, cried to my heart below  
A dawn of darker night and deeper seas.

I saw the Truth afar, blazing so bright  
That to my constant gaze it seemed to come  
Half-way to me. All through a night of Life  
I held my helm, until the morn of Death  
Came on the world; then, as I peered,  
Behold! my beacon vanished, and, alas!  
I only saw its ashes eddying  
Above the breakers of Eternity.

## HATE

“**L**ET Merit cease to be!” This was the crime—  
That Merit lived at all! Could *he* forgive?  
Could *he* make reparation? Strike him down!  
And Envy then might breathe again, and Hate  
Accept apology! So Merit died.  
Yet o'er his grave stood Hate, deep in the night,  
While Courage slept, and on the low-hung clouds  
Hate poured his woe—he had so small relief,  
Though 'neath his feet great Merit lay in peace.

## IRKOUTSK TO SAN FRANCISCO

*On receipt of news from De Long by Telegraph, Dec. 31, 1881.*

**T**HE grinding ices of the central sea  
Closed round our mariners. The continents  
Peered past the circle of the Dipper stars  
Through fog and storm—in fear. Then when the  
King  
Of Coldland fell upon these venturers  
He crushed their hardy ship within his hand,  
And cast them freezing toward Siberia.  
They touch the world again, and all the world,  
Pleased like a mother with her babe at breast,  
Trembles with joy. These wonders have we seen  
This white-haired year of this hoar century.

The *papa* lisped by kissing babe at night  
Did drift on word-waves from Siberia's plains—  
Did journey west, e'en like this telegraph,  
Full twenty thousand miles, and yet did dwell  
Full twenty thousand years upon the way!  
How, then, shall simple songster read these signs?  
Are scores of thousand zodiacs a jot  
To point God's periods? Or is a flight  
That jibes at distance, mocks at time, itself  
An essence of the ages, or a soul  
Of dying world? O God! I can but see,  
Here in my darkness, that our compass spreads  
Within Thy narrowest metes; I can but give

For shortest record in Thy chronicles  
The years our dust shall moon yon noble sun!

The Aryan, this morning, stretched his hand,  
And, o'er a pathway strewn with centuries,  
Knocked at the Golden Gate! Such was the act!  
Yet not more fugitive and brief than man!  
Nor yet than his abode, this girdled orb!  
A spark of light, sped by the craft of man;  
A flash of years hurled from the hand of God—  
So passes man's short history here on earth—  
So passes earth's short history here in heaven!

## FANNY DRISCOLL

**L**IFE woke within her, and her chorded soul  
From harpéd heaven, breathed fine harmonies  
E'en when Eola passed, at which Eola led  
That way her Sister, whom devout mankind  
Have left unnamed; straightway the poet's wand  
Built up a temple and a worship lit  
That famed the region. Then the people cried:  
"Behold! a priestess, yea, a prophetess!"

And as her temple rose, and multitudes  
Surrounded, clamoring, she added then  
A holier rite—where woman at her best  
With warmest heart most glorifies the world.  
Now blazed her altar, and her oracles  
Had life's full meaning; yet that very blaze  
Warmed into life the python Phthisis, coiled  
Close by the sacred flame. One cruel blow  
That serpent struck, and set the poet's clay:

As flees Eola when the cloud-wheel stalks  
Red-cored with lightning from Dakota's plain,  
So fled the poet's soul when vorticed Death  
That sweetly censered temple overwhelmed.

Grim airs of Death, ye leave our fields so bleak  
We have no flowers for our sweet poet's grave!

### A LEAF

**F**ROM out the topmost bulb—a budding sentry—  
A leaflet spread its green against the blue;  
The songsters heralded its earthly entry  
And it was christened in the Morning's dew.

All through the summer, on an oak that towered,  
A stately captain of his lordly kind,  
It fanned the birdlings in their nest embowered,  
Or from their housing turned the churlish wind.

Then Autumn chanting came, in vestments sober,  
Bearing the cup of dissolution's lees;  
Forth in the majesty of hazed October,  
A withered leaf was hearsed upon the breeze.

## MEMORY

OUR hopes may lie as cold as love fear-sapped—  
As ripe to be inhumed oblivion-wrapped—  
Yet mournfully we keep them on their biers,  
Palled in the shadows of the gloomy years.

Deep in our misty woe we hover prone  
Above their corses, and, with bated groan,  
The story of their life and death recite  
Unto our only friend, the poor, blind Night.

Our wounds are all we have—we love them well;  
Their quickness pleases us—we nurse the spell;  
Not one of us dare crave, for our distress,  
The clammy keep of blank Forgetfulness.

TO H. G. C.

**B**IRD in these woods! how drear to me  
The moaning of these woods will be  
When thou dost sing thy morning lay  
In fairer forests, far away!

When ermined Winter scowled on thee,  
A wandering warbler, sad to see—  
Meek was thy mien 'neath his restraint,  
Thy plumes were piteous, not thy plaint.

But when the Summer came to thee,  
How thou didst swell with melody!  
Thy song will ever welcome be  
In my sweet-echoing memory.

Bird in the woods! how mute will be  
These music-throbbing leaves to me  
When owls of envy, hawks of scorn,  
Hoot through the night, rail at the morn!

## *SUGGESTIONS FOR A NAPOLEONIC DRAMA*

### I

#### NAPOLEON AFTER MURDERING D'ENGHEIN

**I** THINK I killed ten thousand men at Friedland.  
I know it made me qualmy of the blood—  
Though I had won my war-legs, and had seen  
Some horrors. “Bravo!” cried the clods and crowns;  
“This general fights like Mars! Let’s make him  
peace!

Let’s call him master, cousin!” Yet—I clip  
One royal wart from off the public weal,  
That’s pinched mankind to penance, like some bean  
Blistering a fool’s heel—and these same clods  
Shudder like jelly! Bah! God’s wounds! . . . And  
still

France must not brood on even this one egg  
Of discontent, or I, her stile-brained choice,  
Crowned by her patriarchal pontiff, oiled  
By simpering tongues, will flounder. Too much  
blood  
Flows in her veins. She needs the leech of war!  
By the raft of Tilsit! she shall have it!

### II

#### NAPOLEON AFTER WATERLOO

**M**Y SHIP is past my helm; I wait the shock  
That breaks my keel. One moment on those  
rocks  
And I, great wreck, shall strow the beach of Time,

Piling the higher with the ages. There  
Let little conquerors, upon the income  
Haply of their good tide, pick up small fragments  
From my rich voyage, and forge themselves thereby  
Proud salutations! Ah ye world of midges,  
Little did ye know how with a brand the more  
I could have burned the air free of your corpses!

### III

#### THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

*[The Rock of St. Helena—Napoleon dying—Doctors and attendant—A great storm.]*

**N**APOLEON. Six years have knit the broken  
bones of the world.

Cæsar and Alexander, Hannibal,  
I join you.

ATTENDANT. There's danger in this storm.

DOCTOR. I fear it.

NAPOLEON. Moscow, Leipsic, Waterloo,  
Cease troubling me! Ye mar the deeper chant  
Of wars that on a weeping world enthroned me!

ATTENDANT. Sire, it is the storm—'tis nothing but  
the storm!

NAPOLEON. Holy Alliance of the elements,  
Shout o'er my soul! It was imprisoned before  
An army of small Kings had taught to men  
This use of St. Helena. All your waves  
May scourge this rock, and all oncoming time  
May push its greedy billows; my great name  
Shall flash, a towering light upon the reef,  
To warn all men against ambition.

ATTENDANT.

Sire!

O Sire! renounce ambition: *speak* to me!

NAPOLEON. Ambition! ay, it is the coast of Hell!

And they who cruise thereby a helm must hold  
Gigantic. O it is sad for the envious

To come that way! They sail for cargoes rich  
Their leaking ships to load; there's greater hope  
For little children begging charity

Of mouse-faced men!

DOCTOR. His heart-beats quicken! God!

'Tis history!

NAPOLEON. Aha! an eagle's beak!

[*Clutching his heart.*

Pluck deep, proud bird! 'Twill run in your blood!

Your chicks

Will in the storm-cloud build their tabernacle.

[*Falling back.*

I die—a simple word—a simple thing.

When Death sits by the great they do not weep  
The world good-by. With smiling face they greet  
Our equal minister.

[*Death dimly revealed as a skeleton, seated on the further side of the couch.*]

Good Pastor, know

That I sought not this corner of thy parish,  
Giving thee journey. France should set mine urn  
Within our capital—'twould profit her  
More than her palaces. To eternal rest  
I give my clay; this oldwife Earth will long  
And lovingly prate of the spouse who beat her.

## THE SAINT IGNATIUS

**A** SCHOLAR, lightly reading, heard the storm,  
Yet used it for his comfort. Roaring grates  
Mocked at the gale. Through parlor-arches flowed  
Faint airs like summer waves, so peacefully  
That though they sought a well-accustomed ear  
They seemed to ride some new-discovered sea,  
And passed unknown, to strand amidst perfumes.

Thus read the scholar:

“Once upon a time,  
The Etruscan country sounded far the fame  
Of Saint Ignatius, Best of Blessed Men,  
And filled with holy fire; until a fervor  
Seizing on a youth, he sought, and, journeying,  
He found the monk, and in his monastery,  
The Brothers Paul, Maximilian, Eustace, Luke,  
Marcellus, Simon, Vincent, Hilary,  
And Pius—holier men than common mortals.

“With hope of gaining heaven the youth besought  
Those monks that he might join a timid voice  
With their loud adorations. Thus it came  
This worshiper was soon a novice in  
The trade of praising God. He ate the husks  
And chaff of outer form until his soul  
Grew gaunt and meagre. So, one day he spake  
And said unto the saint and brothers nine

That he should leave them. Then, their under  
eyelids  
Drooping on their cheeks, the friars crossed them-  
selves,  
Spurned him, and, in their wrath, threw ashes on  
him.

“So journeyed he unto a mighty town  
Where wealth unmeasured waited him, and years  
Piled up his fame, until no distant land  
Outlay his reputation. All the past—  
As dusk dissolves at dawn—went from his mind.  
But through these times, a war and scandals  
vague  
Had brought our monks to beggars’ beggary.  
Therefore it came to pass, one wintry night,  
That as the great man sat in his rich home,  
And Comfort held the citadel,—a storm  
Encamped about, balked but beleaguering—  
There came a knock upon his outside portals,  
Knocking with loud assurance as of kinsmen  
Come to a Christmas feast. Whereat he ordered  
The opening of his massive doors; and there  
With under-eyelids drooping on their cheeks,  
Stood Saint Ignatius, Best of Blessed Men,  
And Brothers Paul, Maximilian, Eustace, Luke,  
Marcellus, Simon, Vincent, Hilary.  
And Pius,—all the ten, ten times unwelcome.”

Then natural weariness and luxury  
Combined to stop this tale. The scholar’s eye  
Roamed past the arches where red firelights, flash-  
ing,

Jeweled the trappings, or in fairy fabrics  
Arrowed barbaric wounds; anon his gaze  
Visited a far salon, where tigers glared,  
And shrinking leopards crouched in tawnier wools  
From Anatolia—carpetings that waved  
Like growing grain. On ebb'd the harmonies,  
Almost as subtle as the soul—elusive  
E'en as happiness!

Lured thus, the scholar  
Sadly remembered him how, like the novice,  
He in his boyhood worshiped where a priestess,  
Sitting demurely at her instrument,  
Made him her slave, yet simply played Pique Dame  
And Zampa, Trovatore, Traumerei,  
And William Tell. To him those strains became  
An ecstasy of hope. Anon she swept  
The throbings of his heart, finding them not  
Delightful to her touch, so that the youth  
Was left by Love to die; but he sprang up,  
And, as he mended his hurt heart, the maid  
Still at her siren keyboard played Pique Dame  
And Zampa, Trovatore, Traumerei,  
And William Tell, which thence, with gradual years,  
Grew sweet once more, and served the requiem  
Of his agony. Soon a maid more fair,  
More happy, and more lovable, he woed  
And wed, while all the years outran each other,  
Bringing him blessings and renown.

But, wondering  
Why thus the witch Remembrance croned her  
ghosts

To fright Contentment, up the scholar rose  
And strode adown his parlors. Then the music  
Waking his mind once more, he needed nought  
To tell him why his moments had been saddened.  
A favorite daughter, sitting in an alcove,  
Seeking to please his ear, had played Pique Dame  
And Zampa, Trovatoré, Traumerei,  
And William Tell. Thus through his revery  
Had stalked the shades of a forgotten passion—  
Thus opened memory's outer gates, and there,  
With under eyelids drooping on their cheeks,  
Stood Saint Ignatius, Best of Blessed Men,  
And Brothers Paul, Maximilian, Eustace, Luke,  
Marcellus, Simon, Vincent, Hilary,  
And Pius—all the ten, ten times unwelcome.

## A TRAGEDY OF STATE

THE morn!—as gray as was the look of death  
Upon my husband's face! I could have wished  
The morn had never come—yet when I knew  
It stole upon the murder of my son  
I had no patience. Out on such a day!  
A cancer on all time! E'en now the slaves  
Behold my boy with executioner's red lust,  
And laugh like grave-dogs. O how I did plead!  
(When was't—I've slept not!—'twas the day  
before—

And God! to-morrow will be afterward)—  
Ay, yesterday I kneeled before that man,  
And prayed as one should pray to God alone  
To aid my cause! O Governor! O hear!  
My son did lift his hand in blood made hot  
With cursed wine. He did that thing of shame  
In wildest passion. Then let not this law,  
Built in men's wisdom, fall on his young head  
And break me with the stroke!" "Good woman,  
list:

You think not of the victim slain, a mother  
Visiting his early grave and planting flowers  
With hand by horror palsied!" "O great sir,  
Have mercy! Would that my poor son had fal'n  
And I passed by the copings of the rich  
To find an humbler grave and shed my tears!  
That, sir, were grief—but not a devilish grief  
To wreck the human soul. Revolting God!

Must I, then, grasp the brush of obloquy  
And mark the headstones of a line of sires  
All pure and honorable? If this blow  
Fall on my head, have I, then, but the woe  
Of that sad mother? Hearken, O great sir!  
This law was made by men well satisfied  
In life, afar from deadly acts. Would they,  
O sir—would they build up a thing from Hell  
To tear the holy life from out a man?  
Would they come from such sacrifice and set  
This devil's ceremony in its place,  
Among our laws the foremost? Never! No!  
And you—who can by one small, written thing,  
Estop this second curse—would you for hire—  
For all the welcome gifts of your high power—  
Go to that den of death and strain the life  
Out of this fellow being? Nay, O nay!  
Do not therefore, I beg, drive those base hinds  
Who group around my son to eat his flesh  
And earn their bread by toil so damnable!"  
"Good man!" he said, as he had said "Good woman!"  
"Good man, show her the way! I fear she needs  
Some help to walk! Good woman, I will act  
As well becomes my duty. If I find  
My pity can have ear, you may take hope!"  
And at the very time, as I did turn,  
He bade a second clerk the case was closed,  
And other matters pressed.

O breathing life!  
Hast thou lain coiled within my heart this while  
A deadly snake? Am I a thing of death,  
A living upas, bearing fruit of men

Who must be tracked and torn by human hounds?  
Upon the green I played with little girls:  
My breath was sweet, my eyes were blue, my hair  
Was such that good old men would stop awhile  
To stroke my head and ask my name. At night  
My mother heard my sins, and found her heart  
Full wide for blessings, teaching me that God  
Had yet a greater love. And, as I grew,  
No warning came. My husband bore me forth  
While lantered steeple rocked with wedding-bells;  
And of the love we had we built a home  
Which Death espied. Then went my husband out  
The dreaded journey and my babe sucked salt  
From sorrow's breast! *Mayhap 'twas there the child*  
*Fed on the sin*—ay, let me have the hope:  
That then in agony the murder-draught  
Was filtered. Thus my soul with kinder look  
May leave my wretched body. Thus my son  
With parent ghost may walk beyond this world  
In mien all nobly sad.

*The hour of Death.]* My friends, forgive!  
I soon will be the mother of a corse  
Made by the State. The State thus deals with me.  
And I do ask you, stand without, and watch  
That I may know the earliest approach  
Of that which now awaits.—I am alone!

*A courier:]*

Let not that messenger come near whose words  
Stand on his ugly face—I'll not have it

*Drinks:]*

How sweet this cup! How kind these murderous  
pains!

How quick!—not e'en a tithe so horrible

As smiles of pity from a Governor.

*Dying:]*

Then this is death! I had some girlish hope  
There would be light! 'Tis cold—I have not felt  
Such cold before. 'Tis further than I thought.  
O shades! if ye be round me, cry aloud!  
Where waits my son? My son, desert me not!

## PASTORAL

### I

IMMERSED in sunshine, tremulous, intense,  
Lie depths of wheat, and corn, and pasturage;  
And where the acres meet in rivalry,  
A miser-pond evades the Sun-King's tithes,  
Hiding with lily leaves an envied hoard.  
Far off, an oaken family surround  
A giant of hard fibre, who has sat  
At feast with Time himself, and banqueted  
On centuries. There well-fed cattle stand,  
Watching unenviously the outer sky,  
Where cloud-flocks graze upon the sides of heaven.  
Some proud pond Ararat has stayed a plank  
And raised it well aslant; upon this perch  
A row of turtles bask their checkered backs,  
And view with stolid look the overtures  
Of nodding reeds and fawning marsh-grass nigh.  
The weary wheat-stems stoop like mendicants,  
While alien rye-stalks rear their empty heads.  
The corn—(just o'er a fence where chipmunks  
romp)—  
A green, cockaded host, in phalanx drawn,  
Each soldier armed with many cutlasses—  
Bespeaks the pomp of disciplined array,  
Nor flinches in the fervor of the sun.

O'er all a storm-portending haze; from all,  
A heated perfume—clover, wheat, and corn.

II

The swan-like clouds that swam with swelling wing  
In tropic, halcyon, horizon seas,  
Have changed to furious cars of war, and drive  
To offer scowling battle with the sun.  
High o'er Andean lines of clouds there looms  
A solemn Chimborazo of the sky,  
And from its avalanching sides flash forth  
The spears of hosts in heavenly ambuscade.

The black clouds upward clamber, and the mount  
Attains new height, till now, as Titans mad  
Pile other mountains on too recklessly,  
The upper fabric topples—yet, indeed,  
Some nightmare compromise with gravity  
Leaves Earth uncrushed.

Anon, a horrid sight  
Hovers on high: The flapping storm-cloud seems  
A mighty vampire come to suck the world.

Hotly the archers pour their golden darts  
From parapets of light and battlements  
With glory blazing—dreadlessly and dire  
Not less, their hideous enemy assaults  
The splendid citadel—alas! how soon  
Beleaguered Day is fallen prisoner!

Now dirgeless shadows in long pageant come,  
Of gloom the celebrants, death-angel-like;  
And as their progress blackens field and pond

The turtles scramble down in clumsy haste,  
And loyal cornstalks on the distant hill  
Wave goodbys sunward with bright oriflammes.

Down through an air come up from nether earth,  
Forth from the turmoil of inverted seas,  
A fiery force with crash on crash is hurled,  
Thrilling all things as if the startled earth  
Rocked in volcanic violence. This signal made,  
The volleys of the pirate squadrons pound  
Hard on the haughty corn, the modest wheat,  
And on the lily leaves like musketry  
Rattle their crystal bullets. Gusts of air  
Chase nimble swirls of rain; through yeasty mists  
A million worlds join to the universe,  
And shackles of white lightning manacle  
The trembling sky. Heaven is an idol-house,  
Thick with abominations, and its walls,  
Its lurid walls, are darkened with the shapes  
Of pagan elements in revelry.

### III

The storm recedes, the sun shines out, the clouds,  
Like fallen fortresses, their portals ope  
Before the flight of earthward-hurrying beams—  
And lo! the couriers with their victory!  
The music of the herd comes o'er the mead  
In homely cow-bell tones, as rude to-day  
As in Pan's time. The clover-synod kneels—  
Each tiny bishop's mitre lit with gems—  
And silken rustles fill the aisles of corn,  
As though the wives of modern Pharisees  
Passed to their public prayer. Behind a gorge

Of ether icebergs, Hope, at azure loom,  
In warp of sunrays with a woof of rain,  
Arches her rainbow web upon the black  
That curtains all the east, where crowds the storm.

**GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP**

**La Grange County, Indiana, 1861.**







